

Pol 195: Policy Analysis in California
University of California Center Sacramento
Fall 2020

Instructor: Maria Pantoja
Class Time: Friday 10:00-12:00

Office Hours: M 12-2, and by appointment
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Course Description

California is a special place. It is the most populous, most prosperous state in the Union. But, of course, with those superlatives come other, less positive ones, including economic inequality, water shortages, racial disparities in the criminal justice system, among many others. This course will cover how policies that address these issues get made. We will study everything from identifying issues to prescribing solutions to evaluating outcomes. Along the way, we will learn the ins and outs of a variety of tools that policy researchers use to analyze policy and policymaking.

Required Textbooks

There is one assigned textbook for this course. We may also have additional assigned readings during various weeks of the course. These readings will be made available on Canvas. All assigned readings, for each week, should be completed before coming to class.

- *Introduction to Public Policy*, Charles Wheelan

Course Policies

Attendance, Participation, and Weekly Readings

Class attendance is required. On Zoom, students should turn both their audio and video on and come class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Students that constructively contribute to class discussion most regularly and fully participate in other in-class activities will receive a boost to their attendance and participation grade. Students that do not contribute to in-class discussion or fully participate in other in-class activities will receive a lower grade. **Any student that has three or more absences will not be able to receive a passing grade for the class.** Arriving 10 minutes late to class will count as an absence.

Grade Appeals

You have the right to request a re-grade of your quizzes, exam, and assignments. All appeals should be submitted within one week of receiving a score and must be accompanied by a one-page memo explaining why you are requesting a regrade with evidence. Appealing your grade entails re-grading the entire assignment, and your grade can go up or down.

Academic Honesty

It goes without saying that all of your graded work must be done by you without assistance from others. You are encouraged to discuss the class and materials with others, but your answers to exam questions and your written essays must be yours and yours alone, with proper attribution for sources you wish to cite. If you are unfamiliar with the University's policy on academic dishonesty and associated penalties, see <https://ossja.ucdavis.edu/code-academic-conduct>.

Reporting Duties

Please be advised that UC Center Sacramento professors, instructors, teaching assistants, and administrators are mandatory reporters under Title IX. This means that we are required to pass on reports from students, whether communicated verbally during class discussion or office hours or as part of a written assignment or exercise, to the UC Davis Title IX officer and other relevant UC Davis officials. If you wish to seek out help or resources with a non-mandated reporter, please see <https://sexualviolence.ucdavis.edu/get-support>.

Students with Disabilities

Any student who, because of a disability, may require some special arrangements in order to meet any of the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations. It is the responsibility of the student to request accommodation for individual learning needs. UC Davis will make every attempt to accommodate all qualified students with disabilities. For more information on accommodations, see <https://sdc.ucdavis.edu/students>.

Student Resources

See <https://resources.ucdavis.edu/> for a list of UC Davis resources available to students, including health and wellness, academic, and counseling services.

Course Requirements

Grade Breakdown

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|--------------------------------------------|-----|
| Attendance and Participation | 10% |
| Reading Quizzes | 10% |
| Podcast/Video Summaries | 10% |
| Policy Research Paper Proposal | 10% |
| Midterm Exam | 20% |
| Policy Research Paper Background & Outline | 10% |
| Final Policy Research Paper | 30% |

Reading Quizzes

To encourage reading and foster productive discussions, there will be weekly quizzes due before the start of class on Fridays on that week's assigned reading. Quizzes will be posted on Canvas (~5 multiple choice questions, ~15 minutes) at the end of the week and will be due any time before class on Friday.

Podcast/Video Summaries

There are many important policy issues affecting California that we will not have time to cover in lecture. In order to become more familiar with the wide array of policies that impact California, students will listen/watch five different policy-related programs. A list of videos and podcasts will be posted on Canvas, but students can also choose their own videos/podcasts. After watching/listening, students will complete a one-page double-spaced critical synopsis of the program that addresses the following: 1) title of video or podcast and names of hosts and guests; 2) short summary that identifies questions or controversies addressed in the program; 3) why the policy issue is important to California, and 4) one policy argument you found compelling and why and one policy argument you found less-than-compelling and why. Students must turn in at least three critical synopses by week 6 of the quarter and all five must be turned in by the last week of instruction.

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will take place during the fifth week of the quarter and will cover lecture and reading material covered up to that point. A study guide for the exam will be provided at least a week before the scheduled exam time. The exam will be turned in on Canvas.

Policy Research Paper

Students will complete a **Policy Research Paper** (15-20 pages). This policy research paper will examine an important public policy issue in California politics. Students will be required to submit a **Policy Research Proposal** in the third week of the course and a **Policy Research Paper Background and Outline** in the seventh week of the course. Details on the Policy Research Paper, Proposal, and Background and Outline will be provided. The Policy Research Paper will be due during the last week of the course. Late papers will be penalized 5% for each day they are late, including weekends. Papers that are more than three days late will not be accepted. All written work must reflect your own scholarship, in line with the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct. For guidelines on avoiding plagiarism see the SJA at <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/>. You are expected to be aware of these guidelines; ignorance of guidelines does not excuse a violation.

Extra Credit

As an added bonus for attending the Wednesday speaker series, students who only miss one speaker series event will receive a 1 percentage point boost to their Final grade. And students who attend every single speaker series event will receive a 2 percentage point boost to their final grade.

Tentative Course Schedule

| Date | Topic/ Class Content | Readings Due at Beginning of Class | Assignments Due at Beginning of Class |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 1, 10/06 | What is Public Policy? | Chapter 1, Wheelan | None |
| Week 2, 10/09 | Understanding Individual Behavior In-Class Activity: Hypotheses and Policy research Designs | Chapter 3, Wheelan | Reading Quiz |
| Week 3, 10/16 | Understanding Group Behavior Case Study: LA Public Schools | Chapter 4, Wheelan | Reading Quiz Policy Research Paper Proposal (by 11:59 p.m.) |
| Week 4, 10/23 | Evaluating Social Welfare Case Study: California's Three Strikes Sentencing Law | Chapter 5, Wheelan | Reading Quiz |
| Week 5, 10/30 | Midterm Exam | No readings | None |
| Week 6, 11/06 | The Political Process I | Chapter 6, Wheelan | Reading Quiz Minimum of 3 Critical Synopses Due |
| Week 7, 11/13 | The Political Process II | McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (Canvas) | Reading Quiz Policy Research Paper Background and Outline (by 11:59 p.m.) |
| Week 8, 11/20 | The Role of Government Case Study: California's Water Crisis | Chapter 8, Wheelan | Reading Quiz |
| Week 9, 11/27 | Thanksgiving Holiday | No readings | None |
| Week 10, 12/04 | The Role of Institutions | Chapter 14, Wheelan | Reading Quiz |

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| Week 11, 12/11 | Program Evaluation Case Study: Innovations in Healthcare Policy | Chapter 13, Wheelan | Reading Quiz Critical Synopses Due |
| Finals Week, 12/18 | Policy Research Paper | | Final Policy Research Paper (by 11:59 p.m) |